Kissinger Cautious on Mideast Talks

By Jack Anderson

Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger believes he can negotiate an agreement to separate Israeli and Syrian forces on the turbulent Golan Heights. But he has warned President Nixon of the danger that Syria's President Assad might "jump the tracks."

Kissinger's success in arranging a disengagement may determine whether American motorists will have to start lining up again for gas. For Arab leaders have warned that the oil embargo may be reimposed if a Syrian-Israeli settlement falls through.

Kissinger laid the groundwork in Moscow for a settlement by promising to consult with the Soviets. Intelligence reports claim they tried to disrupt the negotiations by encouraging the Syrians to make impossible demands and to open fire on the Golan front.

The Soviets reportedly feared Kissinger was trying to squeeze them out of a Middle East settlement. They are particularly eager, according to intelligence assessments, to retain their influence with Syria and Iraq, which will give them access to the oil-rich Persian Gulf.

During his Kremlin call, Kissinger sought to reassure the Soviets that they will have a voice in any final Middle East peace. He is expected to stop off in Geneva to consult with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko before beginning the next round of talks with the Syrians and Israelis.

Sources close to Kissinger tell us he has cautioned the President that the psychology of the negotiating process sometimes seems to take precedence over the merits of the arguments.

He has reported that President Assad is highly intelligent, with a sharp sense of humor, but unpredictable. The Syrian leader is caught between factions, some of them extremist, according to Kissinger.

He is carefully informing the Egyptians, meanwhile, of every move he is making. He wants them to understand that he has done his best in case the Syrian negotiations break down. His strategy is to keep the peace on the Israeli-Egyptian front no matter what happens with Syria.

Changing Times: A confidential campaign document, which has been buried in President Nixon's files for more than two years, dramatizes how fortunes have changed.

Today, the President is pleading privately for invitations to campaign for Republican candidates, as evidence that he isn't political poison. But the memo shows that only two years ago he selected what Republicans he would favor with the haughtiness of a dowager queen choosing a ceremonial robe.

In the memo, campaign deputy director Jeb Magruder relayed a message from White House staff chief H. R. (Bob) Haldeman to Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

"Haldeman indicated," wrote Magruder, "that the President will not do TV clips for senators and House candidates, but will do simple written endorsements for these candidates."

As for hopeful GOP newcomers, the President took an even more high-and-mighty view. "The President," Magruder informed Mitchell, "is willing to have his picture taken with incumbent candidates but will not do them for new candidates for the Senate and the House."

Footnote: Many Republicans in Congres are still grumbling about the treatment they got from Mr. Nixon and his campaign committee in 1972. Some of them, ironically, may now sit in judgment on him if his impeachment comes before the House and Senate.

Indian Water: The Pueblo Indians have accused the Justice Department of "throwing" a case concerning Indian water rights in New Mexico. Our own sources at the Bureau of Indian Affairs agree.

The Justice Department is supposed to defend Pueblo rights to Rio Grande water against the state of New Mexico. The Pueblos, survivors of the oldest civilization on the continent, have used the Rio Grande waters for irrigation for centuries.

Over the years, the government and developers have slowly drained away their water rights for non-Indian projects. Their ancient civilization simply will dry up, they contend, if they lose this latest case.

The Pueblos, therefore, brought in a prestigious Albuquerque law firm to review the Justice Department's preparation of the case. In a confidential memo, the firm warned that "the government's case is not prepared for trial."

Furthermore, "if the preparations proceed without change," declared the law firm, "there is a serious possibility that the case will be lost."

Footnote: A Justice Department spokesman said they had seen the private review prepared by the Albuquerque lawyers. Justice will work with the private lawyers on the case and "will do the best we can," promised the spokesman.

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